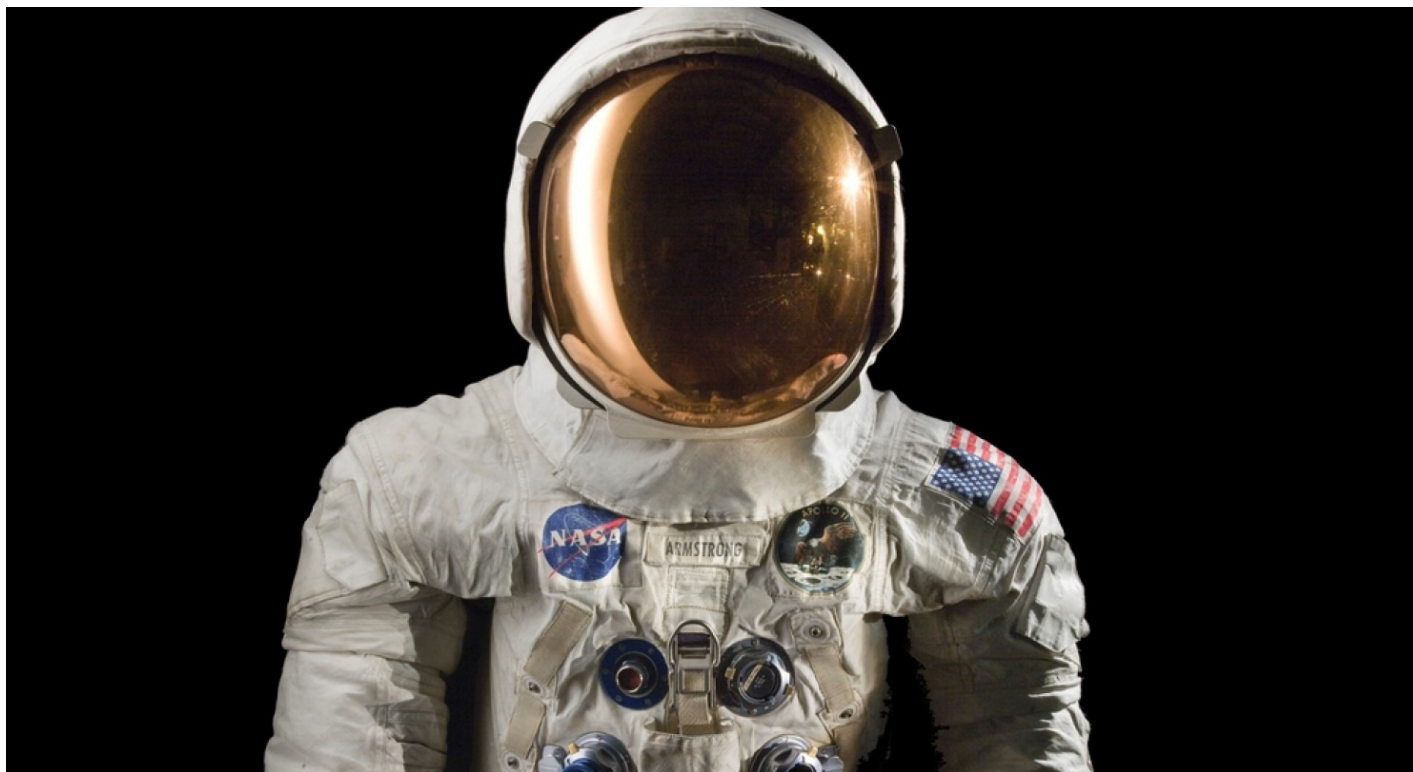


Air and Space Museum partners with Kickstarter to fund the display of Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 spacesuit



Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 spacesuit is the subject of the Smithsonian's first Kickstarter campaign. (Courtesy of National Air and Space Museum)

The National Air and Space Museum launches its first Kickstarter campaign Monday, asking the public to contribute \$500,000 to conserve, digitize and exhibit Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 spacesuit.

The first in a year-long partnership with the online fundraising site, [#RebootTheSuit](#) celebrates Monday's 46th anniversary of Armstrong's walk on the moon. In return for pledges, the project offers backers the opportunity to go behind the scenes with museum curators as they research and conserve the historic spacesuit.

Officials hope to target new donors to the Smithsonian Institution, which receives more than \$800 million in federal money each year, the majority of its \$1.3 billion annual budget. Although the world's largest cultural complex is in the middle of a seven-year, [\\$1.5 billion fundraising campaign](#), officials do not believe this project competes with its other fundraising efforts.

Asking private donors to fund projects is nothing new, said Cathy Lewis, spacesuit curator at Air and Space.

"We're inviting people in to participate and get a glimpse of what we do every day," Lewis said. "Backers

of Kickstarter (projects) are motivated and interested and we're showing them the process."

Like all Kickstarter efforts, #RebootTheSuit is all or nothing. The Smithsonian museum must reach \$500,000 in 30 days. If it doesn't, its supporters aren't charged.

Backers will be eligible to receive awards ranging from a digital poster of the spacesuit to a 3-D print of Armstrong's glove to a behind-the-scenes experience at the museum.

Armstrong's spacesuit is the pilot project of what is expected to be a year-long partnership between Smithsonian museums and Kickstarter, which has helped 88,000 projects get funded since its founding in 2009.

Lewis and her colleagues have been thinking about the research and conservation of the historic spacesuit for four or five years, she said. They began to add the exhibition element this year. The suit hasn't been on display since 2006.

The museum hopes to create a special case and climate system to allow the spacesuit to go back on display in time for the 50th anniversary of the Apollo mission in 2019. It will become the centerpiece of a new gallery, planned for 2020.